

considered boat people as refugees, except for a handful who could prove that they had been victims of specific incidents of political persecution. Thailand, in particular, pushed Vietnamese boats back out to sea, even though some of them capsized and many boat people drowned.

According to an international agreement, most of the Vietnamese boat people who were judged refugees were transferred to other places, especially the United States, Canada, Australia, and France. However, the majority of the boat people, who were considered economic migrants, were placed in detention camps surrounded by barbed wire and patrolled by armed soldiers. The United Nations helped to fund the camps and monitor living conditions in them until 1996, when the camps were closed, and the remaining boat people were sent back to Vietnam.

In all, 800,000 Vietnamese people have reached the United States since the end of the Vietnam War, another 1 million in other countries. Vietnam remains a major source of immigrants to the United States, but the pull of economic opportunity in the United States is a greater incentive than the push of political persecution.

## Cultural Problems Faced While Living in Other Countries

For many immigrants, admission to another country does not end their problems. Citizens of the host country may dislike the newcomers' cultural differences. More significantly, politicians exploit immigrants as scapegoats for local economic problems.

### U.S. Attitudes Toward Immigrants

Americans have always regarded new arrivals with suspicion but tempered their dislike during the nineteenth century, because immigrants helped to settle the frontier and extend U.S. control across the continent. European immigrants converted the forests and prairies of the vast North American interior into productive farms. By the early twentieth century, though, most Americans believed that the frontier had closed. When the U.S. frontier closed, the gates to the country partially closed as well.

Opposition to immigration intensified when the majority of immigrants ceased to come from Northern and Western Europe. German and Irish immigrants in the nineteenth century suffered some prejudice from so-called native Americans, who had in reality arrived only a few years earlier from Britain. However, Italians, Russians, Poles, and other Southern and Eastern Europeans who poured into the United States in about 1900 faced much more hostility.

A government study in 1911 reflected popular attitudes when it concluded that immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe were racially inferior, "inclined toward violent crime," resisted assimilation, and "drove old-stock citizens out of some lines of work." (There is nothing new about racism, prejudice, fear of unknown groups, suspicion of different cultures, economic fears, and anti-immigration sentiment; only the players on the stage change.)

More recently, hostile citizens in California and other states have voted to deny undocumented immigrants access to most public services, such as schools, day-care centers, and health clinics.

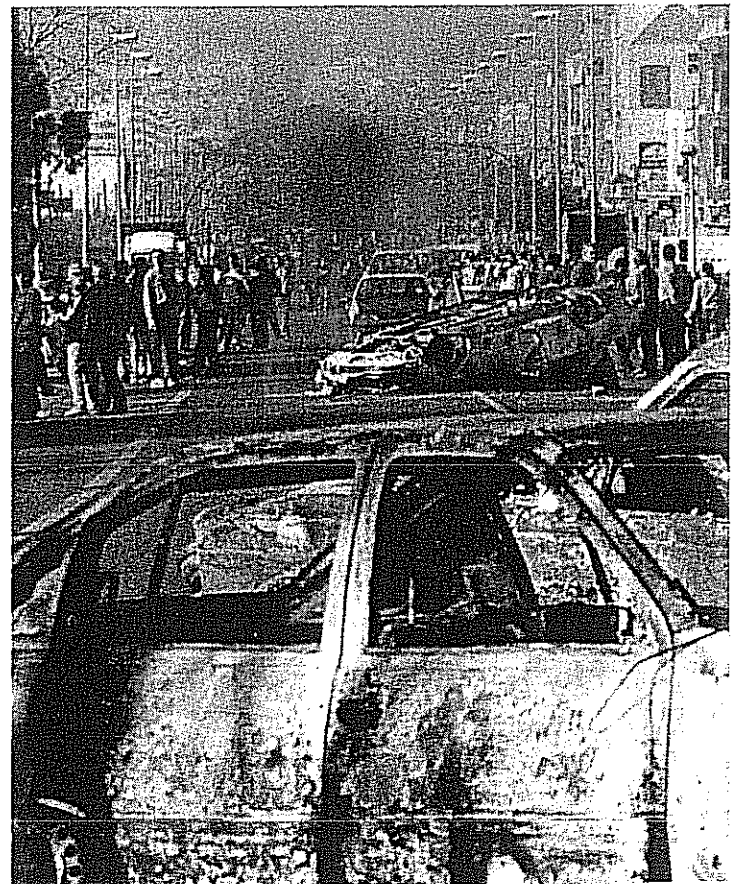
The laws have been difficult to enforce and of dubious constitutionality, but their enactment reflects the unwillingness on the part of many Americans to help out needy immigrants. Whether children of recent immigrants should be entitled to attend school and receive social services is much debated in the United States.

### Attitudes Toward Guest Workers

In Europe, many guest workers suffer from poor social conditions. The guest worker is typically a young man who arrives alone in a city. He has little money for food, housing, or entertainment, because his primary objective is to send home as much money as possible. He is likely to use any surplus money for a railway ticket home for the weekend.

Far from his family and friends, the guest worker can lead a lonely life. His isolation may be heightened by unfamiliarity with the host country's language and distinctive cultural activities. Many guest workers pass their leisure time at the local railway station. There they can buy native-language newspapers, mingle with other guest workers, and meet people who have just arrived by train from home.

Both guest workers and their host countries regard the arrangement as temporary. In reality, however, many guest workers remain indefinitely, especially if they are joined by other family members. Some guest workers apply their savings to starting a grocery store, restaurant, or other small shop. These businesses



Anti-immigration protest in El Ejido, Spain. Spanish youths attacked Moroccan immigrants and burned their homes and cars after three Moroccan immigrants allegedly killed three Spaniards.

can fill a need in European cities by remaining open on weekends and evenings when most locally owned establishments are closed.

Many Western Europeans dislike the guest workers and oppose government programs to improve their living conditions. Political parties that support restrictions on immigration have gained support in France, Germany, and other European countries, and attacks by local citizens on immigrants have increased.

In the Middle East, petroleum-exporting countries fear that the increasing numbers of guest workers will spark political unrest and abandonment of traditional Islamic customs. After the 1991 Gulf War, Kuwaiti officials expelled hundreds of thousands of Palestinian guest workers who had sympathized with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. To minimize long-term stays, other host countries in the Middle East force migrants to return home if they wish to marry and prevent them from returning once they have wives and children.

As a result of lower economic growth rates, Middle Eastern and Western European countries have reduced the number of guest workers in recent years. Several Western European governments pay guest workers to return home, but some of these countries have their own unemployment problems and sometimes refuse to take back their own nationals.

Migration by Asians nearly a century ago is producing contemporary problems in several countries. For example, between 1879 and 1920, the British brought Indians as indentured laborers to the Fiji Islands in the South Pacific. Today, Fiji includes slightly more Indians than native Fijians. For many decades, Fiji was a model of how two culturally diverse groups could live together peacefully under a democratically elected government. Indians controlled most of the country's businesses, whereas Fijians dominated the government and army. However, after an Indian party won the elections in 1987, rioting broke out between the two groups, and Fijian army officers seized temporary control of the government. A new constitution in 1990 ensured that Fijians would hold a majority of seats in the parliament.

The argument of anti-immigrant politicians is seductive to many voters in Western Europe, as well as in the United States: if all of the immigrants were thrown out of the country, then the unemployment rate would drop, and if all of the immigrants were cut off from public programs, then taxes would drop. In an economically integrated world, such arguments have little scientific basis, and in a culturally diverse world, these arguments have racist overtones.

## KEY ISSUE 4

### Why Do People Migrate Within a Country?

- Migration between regions of a country
- Migration within one region

Internal migration for most people is less disruptive than international migration. International migration involves movement to a country with different cultural traditions, such as language and religion. Even

migration among culturally similar countries can be disorienting in less profound ways, such as major sports and popular television programs.

Two main types of internal migration are interregional and intraregional. The principal type of interregional migration is between rural and urban areas, whereas the main type of intraregional migration is from older cities to suburbs.

## Migration Between Regions of a Country

In the United States, interregional migration was more prevalent in the past, when most people were farmers. Lack of farmland pushed many people from the more densely settled regions of the country and lured them to the frontier, where land was abundant. Today, most people move to new regions for better jobs, although many also move for noneconomic reasons.

### Migration Between Regions Within the United States

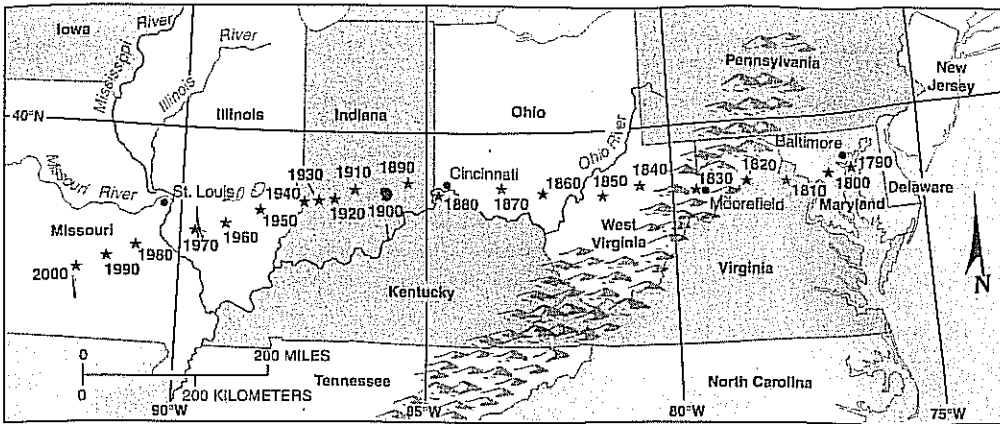
The most famous example of large-scale internal migration is the opening of the American West. Two hundred years ago, the United States consisted of a collection of settlements concentrated on the Atlantic Coast. Through mass interregional migration, the interior of the continent was settled and developed.

**CHANGING CENTER OF POPULATION.** The U.S. Census Bureau computes the country's population center at the time of each census. The population center is the average location of everyone in the country, the "center of population gravity." If the United States were a flat plane placed on top of a pin, and each individual weighed the same, the population center would be the point where the population distribution causes the flat plane to balance on the pin.

The changing location of the population center graphically demonstrates the march of the American people across the North American continent over the past 200 years. When the first U.S. census was taken, in 1790, the population center was located in the Chesapeake Bay, east of Baltimore, Maryland. Throughout the Colonial period, the population center remained roughly in the same place. This location reflects the fact that virtually all settlements were near the Atlantic Coast (Figure 3-12).

Few colonists ventured far from coastal locations because they depended on shipping links with Europe to receive products and to export raw materials. Settlement in the interior was also hindered by an intervening obstacle, the Appalachian Mountains. The Appalachians blocked western development because of their steep slopes, thick forests, and few gaps that allowed easy passage. Hostile indigenous residents, commonly called "Indians," also retarded western settlement.

**EARLY SETTLEMENT IN THE INTERIOR.** Settlement of the interior began after 1790. By 1830, the center of population



**FIGURE 3-12** Changing center of population in the United States. The center has consistently shifted westward, although the rate of movement has varied in different eras. In recent decades, the center has also started to shift southward, a reflection of recent migration to the South.

moved west of Moorefield, West Virginia. Encouraged by the opportunity to obtain a large amount of land at a low price, people moved into river valleys and fertile level lowlands as far west as the Mississippi River.

Transportation improvements helped to open the interior in the early 1800s, especially the building of canals. Most important was the Erie Canal, which enabled people to travel inexpensively by boat between New York City and the Great Lakes. When the Erie Canal opened in 1825, the fare from New York to Detroit was only \$10, yet traffic was so heavy on the canal that tolls paid for construction costs within 9 years. Between 1816 and 1840, the network of new canals dug in the United States totaled 5,352 kilometers (3,326 miles). The diffusion of steam-powered boats further speeded water travel.

After 1830, the U.S. population center moved west more rapidly, to just west of Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1880. The population center moved 11 kilometers (7 miles) per year during that period, compared to only 7 kilometers (4 miles) per year during the previous 40 years. The population center shifted west rapidly, because most western pioneers during the mid-nineteenth century passed through the interior of the country on their way to California.

For much of the nineteenth century, the continuous westward advance of settlement stopped at the 98th meridian (which runs north-south through North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas). Large numbers of migrants passed through the interior without stopping, in part because they were pulled to California, especially by the Gold Rush beginning in the late 1840s. At the same time, the interior of the country confronted early settlers with a physical environment that was unsuited to familiar agricultural practices.

Early nineteenth-century Americans preferred to start farms in forested areas that receive 100 centimeters (40 inches) or more precipitation a year. They cut down the trees and used the wood to build homes, barns, and fences. But when they crossed west of the 98th meridian, pioneers found few trees. Instead, they saw vast rolling grasslands that average less than 50 centimeters (20 inches) of precipitation annually.

Without the technology to overcome this dry climate, lack of trees, and tough grassland sod, early explorers such as Zebulon Pike declared the region unfit for farming. Maps at the time labeled the region west of the 98th meridian as the Great American Desert. Ironically, with today's agricultural practices, the

region west of the 98th meridian to the Rocky Mountains, which we call the Great Plains, is one of the world's richest farming areas.

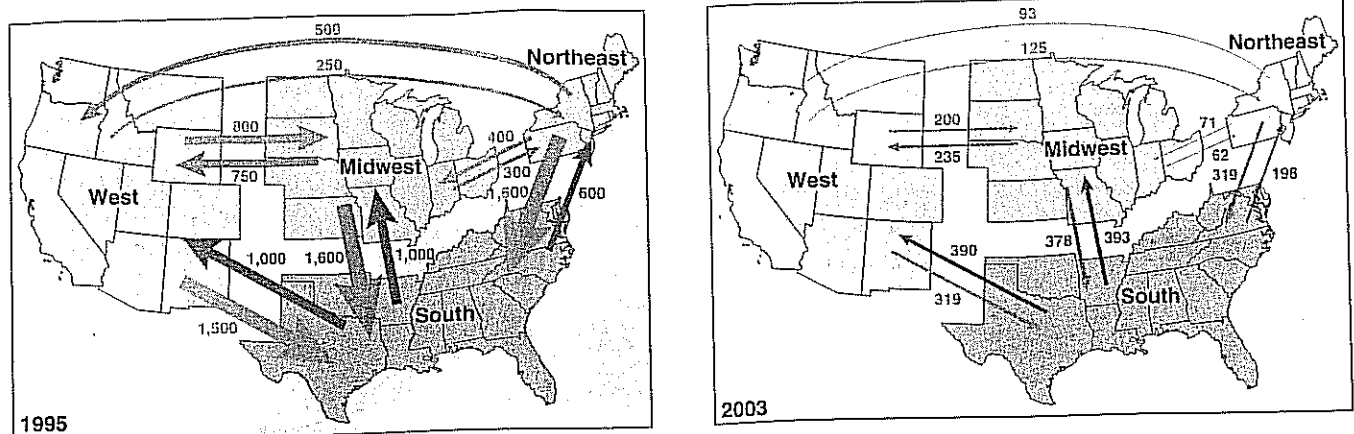
**SETTLEMENT OF THE GREAT PLAINS.** The U.S. population center continued to migrate westward at a much slower pace after 1880. The center moved approximately 5 kilometers (3 miles) per year between 1880 and 1950, less than half the rate of the previous half-century. The rate slowed, in part, because large-scale migration to the East Coast from Europe offset some of the migration from the East Coast to the U.S. West.

The westward movement of the U.S. population center also slowed after 1880, because people began to fill in the area between the 98th meridian and California that earlier generations had bypassed. The Dakota Territory, for example, grew from 14,000 inhabitants in 1870 to 135,000 in 1880 and 539,000 by 1890. Advances in agricultural technology in the late nineteenth century enabled people to cultivate the Great Plains. Farmers used barbed wire to reduce dependence on wood fencing, the steel plow to cut the thick sod, and windmills and well-drilling equipment to pump more water.

The expansion of the railroads encouraged western settlement beginning in the 1840s. By the 1880s, an extensive rail network permitted settlers on the Great Plains to transport their products to the large concentrations of customers in East Coast cities. The railroad companies also promoted western settlement by selling land to farmers. Companies that built the railroad lines received large land grants from the federal government, not just narrow right-of-way strips to lay tracks. The railroad companies, in turn, financed construction of their lines by selling small parcels of the adjacent land to farmers. Rail companies established offices in major East Coast and European cities to sell land.

Between 1950 and 1980, the population center moved west faster, at 10 kilometers (6 miles) per year. For the first time in U.S. history, the population center in 1980 jumped west of the Mississippi River. By 2000, the center had migrated 140 kilometers (88 miles) west of the Mississippi River, into south-central Missouri's Phelps County.

**RECENT GROWTH OF THE SOUTH.** The population center moved southward more sharply during the late twentieth century. Between 1790 and 1920, the center moved almost due



**FIGURE 3-13** U.S. interregional migration. Figures show average annual migration (in thousands) in 1995 (left) and 2000 (right). Compared to 2000, the 1995 figures show much higher total interregional migration and migration into the South.

west. Beginning in the 1920s, the center moved southward, at first slowly, but after 1950 at 4 kilometers (2 miles) per year.

The population center drifted southward because of net migration into southern states. During the 1980s and 1990s, 5 million people a year moved into the South from the Northeast, Midwest, and West, compared to only 2 million who moved out of the South (Figure 3-13 left). Americans migrated to the South primarily for job opportunities. New jobs created each year since 1960 have averaged about 3 percent in the United States as a whole, 5 percent in the South, but only 2 percent in the rest of the country.

People have also migrated to the South for environmental reasons. Americans commonly refer to the South as the “sunbelt,” because of its more temperate climate, whereas the Northeast and Midwest are labeled the “rustbelt,” because of the regions’ dependency on declining steel and other manufacturing industries (as well as the ability of the regions’ climate to rust out cars relatively quickly). As people gain more leisure time, they are lured to the sunbelt for outdoor recreation throughout the year.

The rapid growth in population and employment of the South has aggravated interregional antagonism. Some people in the Northeast and Midwest believe that southern states have stolen industries from them. In reality, some industries have relocated from the Northeast and Midwest, but most of the South’s industrial growth comes from newly established companies.

To some extent, the regional difference in economic growth reduces a historical imbalance, because in the past, people in the Northeast enjoyed higher incomes than residents of the South. Average incomes in the South are currently one-fifth lower than those in the Northeast. By comparison, as recently as 1960, average incomes were one-third lower in the South than in the Northeast, and in 1929, at the outset of the Great Depression, average incomes were two-thirds lower in the South.

Net migration of African Americans historically followed a different pattern. A century ago, most African Americans lived in the South, because their ancestors had been forced to migrate to the region from Africa. During the twentieth century, large numbers of African Americans migrated from the South to take jobs in the large cities of the Northeast, Midwest, and West (see Chapter 7). During the 1990s, African Americans migrated from North to

South and from South to North in about equal numbers, whereas North-to-South migration was much higher for whites. Other interregional migration patterns for African Americans, as well as for Hispanics, now differ little from those of whites.

Interregional migration has slowed considerably in the United States into the twenty-first century (Figure 3-13 right). Net migration between each pair of regions is now close to zero. Regional differences in employment prospects have become less dramatic within the United States. With most new jobs in the service sector of the economy, jobs are expanding and contracting at similar rates around the country (see Chapter 12).

## Migration Between Regions in Other Countries

As in the United States, long-distance interregional migration has been an important means of opening new regions for economic development in other large countries. Incentives have been used to stimulate migration to other regions.

**RUSSIA.** Interregional migration was important in developing the former Soviet Union. Soviet policy encouraged factory construction near raw materials rather than near existing population concentrations (see Chapter 11). Not enough workers lived nearby to fill all the jobs at the mines, factories, and construction sites established in these remote, resource-rich regions. To build up an adequate labor force, the Soviet government had to stimulate interregional migration.

Soviet officials were especially eager to develop Russia’s Far North, which included much of Siberia, because it is rich in natural resources—fossil fuels, minerals, and forests. The Far North encompassed 45 percent of the Soviet Union’s land area but contained less than 2 percent of its people. During the twentieth century, the Soviet government had forced people to migrate to the Far North to construct and operate steel mills, hydroelectric power stations, mines, and other enterprises. In later years, the Soviet government reduced the use of forced migration and instead provided incentives, including higher wages, more paid holidays, and earlier retirement, to induce voluntary migration to the Far North.